The Intensification of Russophobia in Korea from Late Chosŏn to the Colonial Period: Focusing on the Role of Japan*

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According to existing research, Koreans had complex views of Russia from the late nineteenth to first half of the twentieth century. In fact, many Koreans seem to have viewed Russia with both fear and hope during this period. However, it is also true that negative images of Russia were continually and intentionally produced and spread in Korea throughout this period, contrasting with those of other nations such as the United States. This study analyzes the main agents, contents, and characteristics of the intensification of Russophobia in Korea from late Chosŏn to the Japanese colonial period. From the mid-seventeenth to early nineteenth century, Russians featured in Chosŏn records were described as weird barbarians of the Chinese border area. They were considered not as members of a totally different cultural region, the “Western World,” but low-class barbarians who needed to be reformed within the Chinese world order. However, in the late nineteenth century, as Japanese imperialists began to exaggerate the plundering involved in the Russian conquest of Siberia, Russophobia started to spread gradually within Korea. In particular, Japan actively justified its pillaging of Korea based on the logic that it was maintaining peace in East Asia by opposing the Russians, whom they portrayed as “predatory white people.” After succeeding in colonizing Korea, Japan strengthened its anti-communist and anti-Soviet propaganda following the Russian Revolution in 1917. While Japan consistently described Russia as an aggressive, impoverished, and horrible country, pro-Japanese Korean collaborators such as Yun Ch’i-ho, Ch’oe Namsŏn, and Yi Kwangsŭ reinforced such negative images through lectures and writings during the Japanese colonial period.

Keywords: Russophobia, Asian solidarity, anti-communism, counter-revolution, pro-Japanese, anti-Sovietism

*This work was supported by the Hankuk University of Foreign Studies Research Fund of 2018.

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“Russophobia,” or anti-Russian sentiment, refers to negative feelings, loathing, fear, and hatred of Russia, Russians, and Russian culture. Historically, the expansion of Russophobia has been closely related to political, ideological, and geographical conflicts between Russia and Western European countries. Fear of Russia among Western Europeans is usually explained as emerging through Napoleon’s expedition to Russia (1812–1813) or several wars between Russia and Turkey taking place from the late eighteenth to late nineteenth century. In addition, “The Great Game,” a political and diplomatic confrontation between the British and Russian empires that unfolded over most of the nineteenth century, contributed more decisively to the dissemination of Russophobia in Western Europe.¹ Such Russophobia among Western Europeans in the nineteenth century was more systematically spread following the Russian Revolution. Even now, after the Cold War, it still affects Western European countries, as can be seen through incidents such as the recent Ukrainian crisis.²

Koreans also exhibited Russophobia in the twentieth century. Especially, Russophobia, expressed as a form of anti-Sovietism since the mid-twentieth century, was one of the main components of anti-communism, one of the most influential ideologies in contemporary Korean history.³ Propaganda produced by the South Korean government during the Korean War (1950–1953) portrayed the Soviet Union as the de facto agent behind the war, whereby North Korea was just a puppet. In fact, rather than “Chosŏn minjujuŭi inmin konghwaguk” (Democratic People’s Republic of Korea) or “Pukhan” (North Korea), “Pukkoe” 北傀 ("Northern Puppet") served as the official name of North Korea in South Korea until the 1980s. Emphasizing the influence of the Soviet Union on North Korea, the name “Pukkoe” directly demonstrates that the negative perception of Russian Communist forces was one of the main

³. Kim Hakchun, “Pan’gongjuŭi ŭi sŏngnip kwa pyŏnhwa e taehan sahoe’wa’ak kwa kuksahak ŭi kongdong yŏn’gu” [Joint research on social science and national history regarding the formation and change of anti-communism], *Han’guksa simin kangjiwa* 35 (2004): 183–186.
components of Korean anti-communism.

This article will show specifically that Cold War Russophobia in South Korea was not merely a product of the Cold War. Similar to the case of Western Europe, the origins of Korean Russophobia can be found in military and political conflicts between Russia and East Asian nations in the nineteenth century. Korea began to share a border with Russia in 1860 as the latter was sweeping eastward across Asia. Following that, Russophobia related to Russian expansionism became gradually widespread in East Asia, including on the Korean Peninsula. Based on historical documents from that time, this article aims to closely examine how the process of Russophobia became widespread among Koreans following this first encounter. Specifically, the purpose of this study is to examine the main agents, background, and process of the production and dissemination of Russophobia in Korea from the late Chosŏn to Japanese colonial period.

There exist some important articles on Korean recognition of Russia during the period of transition to modernity. Most of these articles demonstrate that Korean perceptions of Russia from the late Chosŏn to Japanese colonial period were actually quite complex. Actually, Koreans viewed Russia with both fear and hope during this period. While fearing a Russian invasion, they also hoped Russia might become a strong ally to defend against other invading countries like Japan. Thus the Korean government adhered to the diplomatic strategy of “balance of power” (kyunseron 均勢論) or “entangling Russia in Korean problems” (in’ach’aeқ 引俄策).⁴ Korean independence fighters during the Japanese occupation also looked to Russia as a force capable of directly assisting in securing Korea’s independence, although they were mindful of Bolshevik radicalism and violence. Thus Koreans viewed Russia with both fear and hope over a long period of time.⁵

However, this article attempts to uncover why the image of Russia alone

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among the many predatory imperialist powers consistently worsened in Korea after the late nineteenth century. At that time in East Asia, Western countries such as the United States, France, Britain, and Germany also carried out explicitly imperialistic policies. The United States and France had even engaged in battles with Koreans, known respectively as “Pyōngin yangyo” (French campaign against Korea) and “Sinmi yangyo” (United States campaign against Korea). However, despite never having been involved in a direct military clash on the Korean peninsula until the Russo-Japanese war (1904–1905), it was Russia that was typically portrayed as a greedy and aggressive country from the late Chosŏn to Japanese colonial period. This was in stark contrast with Korean people’s generally positive perceptions of the United States during the same period.6

Considering this inconsistency, this article closely examines how and why Korean negative perceptions of Russia were continuously produced from the late Chosŏn to Japanese colonial period. It insists that modern Korean Russophobia should be studied not just to figure out Korean perceptions about Russia, but also to reveal the main agents, motives, and channels with respect to the widespread dissemination of Russophobia during the period of transition to modernity. In addition, this article will show that South Korean Russophobia was not merely the product of the Cold War. Negative perceptions of Russia, which constituted a part of Korean anti-communism, have surprisingly deep historical roots. Through historical documents, including the Annals of the Chosŏn Dynasty, Susinsa (diplomatic delegations sent to Japan during the late Chosŏn Dynasty) records, newspapers, and individual diaries, this article will vividly illustrate the specific contents and characteristics of negative impressions of Russia among Koreans stemming from the first encounter of these two countries to the diffusion of Russophobia during the Japanese colonial period.

First Impressions: Strange but not Terrifying, 1654–1860

From the sixteenth to the seventeenth centuries, Russia expanded eastward across Asia. This mainly involved the settlement of Siberia, encompassing the area from the Ural Mountains to the Pacific coast. At this time, there were only

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a small number of natives scattered across this vast region, such as the Buryats, Khakass, and Eskimos.

Russia’s eastward movement unfolded at an incredibly rapid pace. It built a fortress called Yeniseysk (1619) in the upper Yenisei River region and another called Yakutsk (1632) in the middle Lena River region. After exploring the Heilongjiang River (1643–1646), Russians were finally able to reach the Sea of Okhotsk in 1648. Thus it was only seventy years after crossing the Ural Mountains (1582–1648) that Russia was able to secure a vast territory by establishing a base on the Pacific coast.7

Having claimed a considerable part of the Heilongjiang region, Russia did not stop there, but put strong pressure on the whole area of Manchuria, moving southward and crossing the Songhua River, the great tributary of the Heilongjiang River.8 However, the Qing Dynasty failed to grasp the substance of Russia’s newfound power as it expanded into the Heilongjiang area in the mid-seventeenth century. At that time, the Qing was preoccupied with overpowering the Southern Ming Dynasty (1644–1662), which was still putting up resistance in southern China, and thus paid little heed to a seemingly minor military conflict in Manchuria. Qing not only lacked information on the forces that had appeared in the Heilongjiang area but also the capacity to diffuse its military strength. Therefore, the Qing military was completely defeated in its first battle with the Russian army under Khabarov’s command in 1652. Six hundred seventy-six Qing casualties were recorded.9

In Chosón, King Hyojong’s so-called “Rasón chŏngbŏl” (Conquest of Russia) was directly related to this historical situation. When a Qing diplomatic envoy came to Seoul in 1654 demanding conscripts, Hyojong immediately agreed to dispatch his troops.10 Four years later in 1658, in response to the request for a second expedition, Hyojong again immediately decided to send troops.11 Chosón prepared for war by forming a total of 152 expeditionary troops, including one hundred gunners and twenty soldiers

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10. Hyojong sillok [The Annals of King Hyojong], kwŏn 12, [1654/2/2].
11. Ibid, kwŏn 20, [1658/3/3].
skilled in the use of gunpowder. Subsequently, it formed multiracial coalition forces totaling 1,300 troops.¹²

The Chosŏn army showed overwhelming and outstanding combat ability in two consecutive battles with the Russian army. The first expedition lasted eighty-four days, but the Chosŏn army returned without a single soldier killed. Four years later, in the second expedition, it demonstrated excellent skill once more, winning the battle that resulted in 220 Russian troops killed. About 110 Qing troops were killed in the battle, but only eight out of the 260 Chosŏn troops were killed. Although the damage to Chosŏn forces was more than in the first expedition, the second expedition was a decisive victory, and Russian forces no longer descended south of the Songhua River.¹³

The first encounters between Korea and Russia were these two battles, which can be found in historical records. As previously mentioned, this was partly due to the changes in the East Asian international order, such as with the Russian conquest of Siberia since the sixteenth century and the power vacuum in Manchuria caused by the Qing advance into the Chinese mainland. Russians and Koreans thus had their first encounter on the battlefield amid a rapidly changing situation in Northeast Asia.

How did Russia and Korea perceive each other at the time? One can answer this question by looking at Chosŏn and Russian historical records. Chosŏn referred to Russians as “Raso˘n” 羅禪, a phonetic transcription of the Chinese characters for “Russian” at the time of their dispatch of troops. They recognized them only as barbarians living near Ningguta 宁古塔, the birthplace of the Qing Dynasty now located in Ning’an County 宁安縣城, Heilongjiang Province 黑龍江省. In 1654, when a Qing envoy requested reinforcements for the Russian-Manchu border conflicts, King Hyojong first asked, “Where are the Raso˘n based?” The Qing envoy replied that they were “weird people from near Ningguta.”¹⁴ It was not only Chosŏn, then, but also Qing envoys that thought the Rasŏn were a tribe of native people from northeastern China. In other words, neither recognized that the Russians were white Europeans who had crossed the Ural Mountains.

Following the battle, however, Chosŏn remarks reflected a more informed evaluation: “The face and hair of the Rasŏn is similar to that of southern barbarians (nammanin 南蠻人), but in fact he looks much cleverer than the southern barbarians. Therefore, they must surely be neighbors of the southern

¹³. Ibid., 219–236.
¹⁴. Hyojong sillok, kwŏn 12, [1654/2/2].
barbarians even though they are not the southern barbarians themselves.”

Although the term “southern barbarians” was often used to refer to uncivilized races in the southern areas in a derogatory manner, it also signified Westerners, such as the Portuguese and Spanish who sailed through Southeast Asia. In other words, the Chosŏn soldiers who faced Russians on the battlefield pointed out that although “Rasŏn” may have been “weird people from near the Heilongjiang River,” there was also a possibility they came from the West given their appearance. Of course, this was only a guess. Chosŏn people in the seventeenth century usually remembered the Russian-Manchu border conflicts not as the defeat of a Western power that had appeared on the border but the conquest of “weird barbarians near Ningguta.”

After first appearing in Chosŏn records under King Hyojong in the mid-seventeenth century, Russia reappeared in other records throughout the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries as political and economic exchanges between Qing and Russia became frequent following the Nerchinsk Treaty signed between those two countries in 1689. Over this period, Chosŏn sent an envoy called the “Yŏnhaengsa” to Qing every year, and exchanges between these envoys and Russians occurred mainly in Beijing. However, it seems that Chosŏn did not recognize these people as the “Rasŏn” they had encountered in the Hyojong era. To this extent, they were quite ignorant of Russia.

Meetings between Chosŏn envoys and Russians took place mainly at the Arasa legation in Beijing, where Russian Orthodox Church members had resided since the conclusion of the Treaty of Kiakhta between Qing and Russia in 1728. The Chosŏn delegation would stay at Namsogwan (southern official residence), which was located near the Arasa legation. The close proximity of these two houses provided an opportunity for natural exchanges between the two peoples.

In the Chosŏn envoy records there are various descriptions and perceptions regarding Arasa (Russia or Russian people) and the Arasa legation. Interestingly

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15. Sin Yu, Pukch’ŏng ilgi [Diaries on an expedition to the north] (Sŏngnam: Han’guk ch’ŏngsin munhwa yŏn’guwŏn, 1980), 94.
17. Pak Taegūn was the first to discover many diaries of Chosŏn envoys showing perceptions of Russians in the 18th–19th centuries. Pak Taegūn, “Rŏsia ŭi tongbang kyŏngnyak kwa sugyo ijon ŭi Han-Ro kyŏsŏp” [Russia’s eastern invasion and Korean-Russian negotiations before establishing diplomatic relations], in Han-Ro kwan’gye 100-nyŏnsa [One hundred years of Korea-Russia relations] (Seoul: Han’guksa yŏn’gu hyŏbŭihoe, 1984), 20–33.
enough, even at this time the Chosŏn envoys recognized Arasa as but an “eccentric ethnic group” in the Chinese world order system, not one originating from the “Western world.” For example, Hong Sŏngmo 洪錫謨, an escort and the son of envoy Hong Hŭijun 洪羲俊 who visited the Arasa legation on January 23, 1827, described the Russians as follows:

They have white faces with dented eyes and tall noses, and an appearance different from the Chinese... Arasa is not a tributary state to China. Instead it sends people to learn the Chinese Classics who are replaced periodically. China sees to their welfare, allowing them to live in the Arasa legation and teachers to learn. At the moment, there are six to seven of them. The place where they live is splendid and luxurious, similar to the West.18

Evidently, although Hong Sŏngmo noticed that the Russians’ appearance was different from that of the Chinese, through his expression, “similar to the West,” one can infer that he differentiated between Russia and “the West.” While the Russians in the Arasa legation did not pay tribute to China, they were regarded as an inferior ethnic group within the Chinese cultural sphere that was trying to learn Chinese culture. This perception is easily found in other envoy records. An unidentified envoy, who visited the Arasa legation in 1828, described the Russians as follows:

The hoin [barbarian] tried to hand me a booklet, but I rejected it. He said, “My country’s high officials read this book.”... Their habits are simply bizarre. How can they reform their unworthy customs through Chinese edification? They are too strange to approach, and the Christian shrine is so weird I cannot even bear to look upon it. Therefore, when I return home I will have to tell people going to Yanjing not to visit the Arasa legation. Nearby the east tower of Xuanwu Gate, there is a Western house (西洋館) and Christian shrine, and it is said their exteriors are more magnificent and marvelous than that of the Arasa legation, so there is more to see.19

The envoy referred to Russians at the Arasa legation as “hoin.” At that time, hoin, which meant “barbarian,” was the term used for people residing outside of Chinese civilization; those to the north and west of China were especially

18. Hong Sŏngmo, “Yuyŏn’go” 遊燕藁 [Records of Travel in Yanjing], January 23, 1827, in Talpit araе Yŏn’gyŏng esŏ nonilmyŏ [Strolling about Yanjing under the moonlight] (Seoul: Munjin, 2010), 301.
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referred to as *hoin*.\(^{20}\) The envoy referenced above viewed Russians as people who ultimately had to “reform their bad customs through Chinese edification.” Moreover, he used adjectives such as “strange” and “weird” to describe the Arasa legation, but “magnificent” and “marvelous” to describe the Western house. In this manner, by presenting opposing descriptions, the writer clearly differentiated between “weird Arasa” and the “marvelous West.”

Chosŏn envoys visiting Beijing in the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries regarded the Arasa legation as a major attraction. Located just two hundred to three hundred steps away from the Chosŏn legation and characterized by a culture wholly foreign to Chosŏn, many Chosŏn people would go to see the Arasa legation. As previously mentioned, however, these visitors did not regard Arasa as a mighty “empire” that had extended over the vast continent since the sixteenth century; nor was this the “Western world” of a new civilization, which attracted attention through its marvelous objects. Instead, Chosŏn envoys perceived Arasa as barbarians with grotesque customs, who displayed a nude, bleeding male figure on the façade of their building. They thought the Arasa were merely “*hoin*” who had come to China to be enlightened and who needed to be edified. Not only did the envoys fail to realize they were “Rasŏn,” whom Chosŏn had battled twice in the mid-seventeenth century, but also that they were the inhabitants of an advanced “Western” country.

**Initial Inflow of Russophobia through Japanese Imperialists and Korean Enlightenment Intellectuals, 1860-1910**

In truth, Russians were never of great significance to Koreans until the mid-nineteenth century. However, they began to emerge as significant others for Koreans after the signing of the Treaty of Beijing in 1860, which refers to three separate treaties between Qing and Britain, France, and Russia, respectively. Through these treaties, Britain and France secured the right for their diplomatic ambassadors to stay in Beijing, and Russia received the Maritime Province to the east of the Ussuri River. As a result, Koreans came to share a border with Russians for the first time in history, which was delineated by the Tumen River.

According to existing research, political and economic exchanges with Russia in the 1860s contributed considerably to favorable perceptions of Russia in Chosŏn.\(^{21}\) For at least twenty years after the formation of the new border,

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Russia refrained from aggression, welcomed Korean border crossers to develop agriculture in the Maritime Provinces, and initiated informal diplomatic negotiations to solve border problems. Until around 1880, then, Chosŏn did not perceive Russia as an aggressive foreign country.22

However, Russophobia stressing Russian belligerence began to spread in Chosŏn via Japan. In 1880, Chosŏn dispatched Kim Hongjip 金弘集 to Japan as a Susinsa 修信使 to study Japan’s development and the trends in global affairs. The Susinsa were Chosŏn diplomatic envoys sent to Japan since the opening of Chosŏn ports in 1876. Kim Hongjip arrived in Tokyo on July 6, 1880, and stayed in Japan for about a month.

Upon meeting many important Japanese politicians during his stay, Kim started to think that Chosŏn should enhance its national prosperity and defenses to prepare for Russian invasion. While Japanese politicians served as a powerful influence inculcating Kim with Russophobia, it was Huang Zunxian 黃遵憲 of the Qing legation in Japan, himself deeply affected by Japanese politicians, who particularly emphasized to him the Russian threat.23 Through six talks with Kim, Huang was able to directly influence the direction of Chosŏn diplomacy. He summarized the contents of these talks in the Chosŏn Stratagem (Chaoxian celüe 朝鮮策略), which he presented to Kim.

The basic contents of the Chosŏn Stratagem were that Chosŏn should adopt a pro-China foreign policy, form an alliance with Japan, and cultivate a relationship with the US to prevent a Russian invasion. The stratagem also argued that Chosŏn should enhance national prosperity and defense by promoting industry and trade through treaties of peace, commerce and navigation with Western countries. It was based on the principles of “balance of power” (kyunse 均勢), viewing Russia as an expansionist empire, and “self-strengthening” (chagang 自強).24 In several talks with Kim Hongjip, Huang asserted that “there is nothing more urgent than stopping Russia,” emphasizing

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23. Hwang Zunxian published several books concerning the processes of Japanese modernization during his five-year stay in Japan. His books became the most important measures for Chinese reformists to understand Japanese modernization processes. Refer to the following article concerning the relations between Hwang and Japanese people. Pae Kyŏnghwăn, “Hwang Chunhŏn ŭi Chosŏn ch’aengnyak kwa Asiajuŭi” [Hwang Zunxian’s Chosŏn Stratagem and Asianism], Tongyang hakkŏn’yŏn’gu 127 (2014): 303–340.
Russia’s predatory nature. He stressed that “if Russia wants to get territory, it will definitely start with Chosón.” He thus strived to implant in Chosón diplomatic delegations an image of Russia as a predator, like a “wolf or tiger.”

Immediately after returning to Korea, Kim Hongjip reported his investigations to King Kojong, conveying the Chosón Stratagem and Huang’s Russophobia. Kojong responded by asking, “Are people afraid of Russia in that country?” to which Kim replied, “There was no one who did not regard the issue as a desperate concern [kǔpchōl chi u 急切之憂].” Perhaps it can be assumed that besides the Chinese diplomat, Huang Zunxian, many Japanese people had expressed their Russophobia to Kim.

In fact, quite a few Japanese and Chosón records show that the Japanese expressed Russophobia much more frequently and strongly than Huang Zunxian. At that time, Russia was actually attempting to expand into the Pacific region beyond Siberia. After 1855, for example, Russia tried to hand over the Kuril Islands, already confirmed as its own national territory, to Japan in return for taking possession of the island of Sakhalin. Its continued attempt to occupy all of Sakhalin and take it from Japan finally succeeded in 1875. In 1861, Russia ventured as far south as the Korean Straits to occupy the Japanese Tsushima Island, which it might have used as a stepping-stone for advancing into the Pacific Ocean. However, Russia was warned off by the British fleet and withdrew immediately from the island. In fact, Russia had been executing enough policies to cause the spread of Russophobia among the Japanese in the Pacific region.

Thus many Japanese worried about the future of Chosón, claiming that Russia’s territorial expansion was a “desperate concern.” However, such rhetoric was often hypocritical and essentially greedy, as reflected in the Japanese desire to invade Chosón. At that time, the so-called “argument for Asian solidarity” (Ajia rentairon 亞細亞連帶論) prevailed as the primary rationale for invading Chosón. According to this logic, East Asian nations should cooperate with one another in order to confront Western empires. What this meant, in particular, was that East Asian nations should work together to oppose Russia. In other words, in the late nineteenth century Japan tried to promote Asian solidarity under Japanese “guidance” by disseminating

27. Ch’oe Munhyŏng, Rŏsia ŭ namha, 120–126.
Russophobia.28

Such Japanese attempts to plant Russophobia can be confirmed in various documents. For example, on August 28, 1874, Moriyama Shigeru 森山茂 of the Japanese Ministry of Foreign Affairs met with three Chosŏn officials. Emphasizing the importance of promoting bilateral relations between their two countries, he stated the following:

Early on, Russia wanted to occupy Sandan 山丹 [present Heilongjiang estuary and Sakhalin area] and Manchuria, and now intends to approach the border to your country along the coast of the Amnok River. However, the Qing Dynasty is in crisis and has no power to help your country. Therefore, we are lamenting for your country. We also have borders with Russia. How could we not pay attention? Now, if your country is harmed by Russia, we are not safe either. If we get hurt, we cannot guarantee the security of your country. The blessing of your country is the blessing of our country. The woes of our country are the woes of your country.29

As mentioned above, Moriyama stressed the Russian invasion and the relationship between Chosŏn and Japan as one bound together by a common destiny. His argument was based on the concept of Asian solidarity, whereby he intentionally emphasized Russian invasion. About two years later, Inoue Kaoru 井上馨, a major politician in Japan, issued the following warning to Kim Kisu 金綺秀, who visited Japan as the first Susinsa in 1876: “As I said on Kanghwa Island, there are signs that Russia will move its troops... As for your country, it would be good to prepare your defenses by repairing your [weapon] machinery and training your soldiers.” The next day, Inoue invited Kim to his house and stressed again the importance of informing the Chosŏn king of Russia’s invasive intentions. Miyamoto Koichi 宮本小一 of the Ministry of Foreign Affairs was also present at this meeting.30 He was also known as one who stressed the importance of strengthening defensive power against Russian invasion.31

As previously mentioned, up until the middle of the nineteenth century Chosŏn showed little concern for Russia other than viewing Russians as strange barbarians who lived somewhere close to the Chinese border. But Japanese officials such as Moriyama Shigeru, Inoue Kaoru, and Miyamoto Koichi thought there was a high possibility Russia would invade Chosŏn and sought to inculcate Russophobia in Chosŏn officials. Despite the fact that not even minor armed clashes had occurred around the Chosŏn-Russian border until that time, Japanese officials expressed a sense of vigilance regarding Russia that seemed to evince a genuine concern for Chosŏn, arguing for the necessity of solidarity between their two countries.

Inoue Kaoru had studied in Britain together with Ito Hirobumi and held a post in the new government during the Meiji Restoration and was a key figure behind the Treaty of Kanghwa in 1876, where Moriyama Shigeru was also present, and the Treaty of Hansŏng in 1884. Miyamoto Koichi spearheaded the signing of the “Trade Rules” (muyŏk kyuch’ik 貿易規則) between Chosŏn and Japan on August 24, 1876. The Japanese who imposed Russophobia on prominent Chosŏn politicians in the late nineteenth century were thus typical figures at the forefront of Japan’s political and economic invasion of Korea.

The Russophobia of Japanese imperialists achieved more widespread dissemination among Korean people under the aegis of Korean enlightenment intellectuals, most of whom viewed favorably Japan’s rapid and successful westernization reforms. Especially, the first modern newspapers, mainly edited by those among the early national enlightenment group, directly contributed to the spread of Russophobia among Koreans. These newspapers included Hansŏng sunbo 漢城旬報 (1883–1884), Hansŏng chubo 漢城周報 (1886–1888), and Tongnip sinmun 獨立新聞 (or The Independent, 1896–1899).

Hansŏng sunbo and Hansŏng chubo were the first modern Korean newspapers published as official gazettes. The purpose of publishing these two newspapers was to spread enlightenment thought by instructing the public in contemporary foreign affairs. Park Yŏnghyo and Yu Kilchun, both of the enlightenment group and representative of pro-Japanese reformists at the time, oversaw their initial publication. According to existing research, Hansŏng sunbo, the first modern newspaper, primarily dealt with matters related to China and Japan among many other countries in its early days. However, they came to feature content about Japanese affairs far more frequently as Japan’s influence grew stronger.32 Tongnip sinmun, for example, began to run pro-

32. Kim Chaehyŏn, “Hansŏng sunbo, Hansŏng chubo, Sŏgyŏnmun e nat’anan ch’ŏrhak kaenyŏm e taehan yŏn’gu” [On philosophical concepts in Hansŏng sunbo, Hansŏng chubo,
Japanese articles after March 1897 when it made an agreement to supply news together with the UK telegraph office.\textsuperscript{33} Of course, the newspapers of the day were not easy to obtain due to low circulation and high prices, and this problem was only compounded by the high illiteracy rate. Nevertheless, newspapers at that time greatly impacted society generally through jointly purchased indirect subscriptions, public oral readings, newspaper exhibition rooms, etc.\textsuperscript{34} And \textit{Tongnip sinmun}'s use of the vernacular script rather than Chinese characters, the first such instance in Korean media history, allowed it to obtain a more wide-ranging readership.

The first newspapers in the early modern era, which greatly influenced public opinion at the time, frequently published articles emphasizing Russian aggression and Russia's negative characteristics. For example, on November 10, 1883, the \textit{Hansŏng sunbo} published the following: “Since the Russian Emperor constantly seeks excessive extravagances and territorial expansion making all the lands of the four continents his own...[m]ilitary training has been performed every day in his country. He will attempt to show off his military forces to the whole world in the future.”\textsuperscript{35} \textit{Hansŏng sunbo} published a long description of Russia’s history of invasions in the article “Aguk kangyŏk ki” (Record of Russian territories) on February 7, 1884. The article outwardly expressed Russophobia, saying, “Since Choso now borders Russia, we should also keep our eyes on Russia.”\textsuperscript{36} The newspaper affirmed that “Russia’s dream of southward advance becomes a telltale truth.”\textsuperscript{37}

Anti-Russian sentiment and movements of the Independence Association and its organ, \textit{Tongnip sinmun}, facilitated the rapid spread of fear of Russian invasion of Korea during the late nineteenth century. At that time, Russia was rapidly expanding its political influence in East Asia, maintaining a balance of power with Japan after the Triple Intervention (1895) and King Kojong’s refuge at the Russian legation (1896–1897). However, as soon as King Kojong returned to the palace in 1897, Japan again tried to propagate Russophobia

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and \textit{Observations on a Journey to the West}, Kaenyŏm kwa sot’ong 9 (2012), 164.


34. Hong Chanki, “Kaehwa ki Han’guk sahoe ŭi sinmun tokja e kwanhan yŏn’gu” [A study on newspaper readers during the Enlightenment in Korea], \textit{Han’guk ollon chŏngbo bakhoe} 7 (1996): 98–117.


37. \textit{Hansŏng sunbo}, March 27, 1884.
among Koreans through malicious rumors concerning Russia.\textsuperscript{38} Tongnip sinmun also continually published articles that stressed the invasive character of Russia, but kept silent regarding Japanese aggressive imperialism.\textsuperscript{39} In particular, the Independence Association more directly contributed to the popular dissemination of Russophobia by holding an anti-Russian rally that gathered more than ten thousand citizens in Seoul on March 10, 1898.\textsuperscript{40} Although Russia’s unreasonable demands regarding its interests in Korea were the most important catalyst for anti-Russian sentiments among Koreans, continuous negative propaganda against Russia by Japan and some Korean enlightenment intellectuals directly contributed to the wide and rapid spread of Russophobia at the time.

Such Russophobia persisted in Korea until the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905). For example, Hwangsong sinmun 皇城新聞 (1898–1910), which was published by Korean nationalists to educate the public and improve resistent spirit, warned against Russian foreign policy as follows: “Looking back into history, however great the strength of Britain, France, and Germany, their power cannot match that of Russia... Russia tries to make other nations obey it only by using its strong power.”\textsuperscript{41} Another article remarked, “Russia enjoys war and likes weapons.”\textsuperscript{42} It was even argued that it was necessary to support Japan’s righteous war to protect Choson and China from Russia’s wicked plans and that the emperors of China, Choson, and Japan should work together to prevent Russian invasions.\textsuperscript{43} Asian solidarity and Russophobia, which the Japanese had promoted among Koreans in the late nineteenth century, thus became more widespread in Korea over the course of the Russo-Japanese War in the early twentieth century.

Accordingly, Koreans were keenly aware of Russia’s strategic interest in Korea and continued to view Russia’s Asian policy suspiciously, but fairly underestimated their neighboring country Japan’s aggressive ambitions. Even in the face of the ruinous situation for Choson represented by the signing of the ūlsa Treaty (ūlsa choyak 乙巳條約, Korea-Japan Treaty of 1905) right after the end of the Russo-Japanese War, many Korean intellectuals were still unaware of

\textsuperscript{38} Pae Hangsöp, “Agwan p’ach’on sigi,” 349.
\textsuperscript{39} Ibid., 356, 365.
\textsuperscript{40} Han Ch’olho, “Manmin kongdonghoe, chaju wa minkwŏn ūl oech’in ch’oech’o ūi kūndaejŏk minjung chiphoe” [The people’s mass meeting: The first modern rally calling for independence and civil rights], Naeil ūl yŏnmun yöksa 33 (2008): 40–42.
\textsuperscript{41} Hwangsong sinmun, August 15, 1899
\textsuperscript{42} Hwangsong sinmun, October 1, 1903.
\textsuperscript{43} Hwangsong sinmun, February 20, 1904; February 22, 1904.
the seriousness of the Japanese invasion. They thus called for Chosŏn to overcome the crisis in which Western forces were pushing into the East (sŏse tongjŏm 西勢東漸) through Asian solidarity, which was the pretext for Japan's invasion. To this extent, the awareness of national crisis regarding a potential Western invasion was much more overwhelming than that regarding a Japanese one. Deeply moved and overcome by the development and civilization of modern Japan, many of the first modern intellectuals in Korea were unable to accurately grasp Japan’s aggressiveness, and thus eventually only served to provide legitimacy and a rationale for the loss of sovereignty.

**Japanese Counter-Revolution and Anti-Soviet Propaganda, 1917–1945**

After Russia lost the Russo-Japanese war in 1905, Korea quickly advanced down the path toward Japanese colonization. The Japanese Empire imposed a treaty on Korea depriving it of diplomatic rights in 1905 and made it a complete colony in 1910. Meanwhile, most Korean people quickly forgot the defeated Russia, at least until the outbreak of the Russian Revolution in 1917.

After the success of the Bolshevik Revolution, Russia rapidly emerged as a new hope for those resisting imperialism in Asia and Africa, presenting a new vision for international peace. Particularly, Vladimir Lenin openly promised support for the weaker countries in Asia and Africa, and Russia became a very important and favored power for Korean independence forces. The Lenin regime was the first and only foreign government to recognize the Provisional Government of the Republic of Korea in 1920 and provided it with two million rubles in aid. It secretly continued to provide Korean Communists with aid money through the Comintern even after establishing formal diplomatic relations with Japan in 1925. Post-revolutionary Russia thus became a source of hope for many Korean independence activists.

However, even though Korean independence activists in the 1920s regarded the Soviet Union favorably, it is somewhat doubtful whether such a positive image persisted for Koreans across the entire Japanese colonial period. This is


because Japan consistently strengthened its negative propaganda that seriously disparaged the success of the Russian Revolution and the Soviet Union. Contrary to the fact that Japanese propaganda condemning the United States emerged after the Pacific War in the 1940s, such campaigns against the Soviet Union persistently continued from the late 1910s.

Oppressed populations around the world perceived the Russian Revolution, which gave birth to the first socialist state in history, as a hopeful social transformation. However, imperialist countries such as Japan understood it as an undesirable and dangerous change. Nations including the United States, Britain, France, and Japan needed to somehow quell the clamor for peace and revolution spreading from Russia. Thus these four nations directly supported the Russian counter-revolutionary forces in 1918 by implementing the so-called “Siberian invasion.” In particular, Japan remained in Siberia after the withdrawal of United States, French, and British troops in June 1920 and fought against the Soviet regime until October 1922. Japan is known to have sent about 73,000 troops to Siberia from 1918 to 1922.46

Japanese imperialists believed that the influx of revolutionary and socialist ideas could shake the foundation of their social system. Accordingly, they established new laws and institutions to prevent the spread of socialist ideas and continually strengthened them. Such examples include the Act for the Maintenance of the Public Order in 1925, Prosecution for Watching over Thoughts in 1928, and a large number of official ideological organizations after 1938. As a result, Japanese imperialist voices regarding socialism, revolution, and the Soviet Union were always negative and critical after the 1920s. Such views were directly reflected in Maeil sinbo (official organ of the Japanese Government-General of Korea) and spread throughout Chosŏn. In the 1920s, Maeil sinbo distribution was all but mandatory not only to central government offices and local administrative organizations but also local community leaders. It thus had a major local impact.47

Just what image of Russia did Japan try to convey through Maeil sinbo? According to a study analyzing Maeil sinbo articles on Russia following the success of the Russian Revolution, it published 104 articles related to Russia

46. Hanguk sajŏn p’yŏnch’anhoe, Han’guk kŭnhyŏndaesa sajŏn [Dictionary of the history of modern Korea] (Seoul: Karamgihoek, 2005), 82.
from November 1917 to February 1920. Fourteen articles were about Russian geopolitics, thirty-eight about the Russian Revolution, and fifty-two about the Russian civil war. The study also analyzed the content of the articles related to the Russian Revolution, finding none that were positive; they were mainly negative and critical.  

Based on these findings, one can confirm that the Japanese Government-General of Korea generally perceived Russia negatively. But just what negative images of Russia did Japanese imperialists intend to propagate among the Korean people? Analyzing Maeil sinbo articles published throughout the Japanese colonial period, this paper identifies three typical negative Russian images that Japanese imperialists desired to disseminate.

First, the Japanese portrayed post-revolution Russia as a nation of hunger, chaos, and cruelty. In order to prevent the inflow of socialist ideology, in other words, Japanese imperialists propagated the notion that Russians were much more confused, miserable, and poorer than they were before the Russian Revolution. They also called the Bolsheviks who led the revolution “radicals” (*ktwagyökp’a 過激派) and emphasized that Russians were exposed to violence on a daily basis since the Revolution.

According to Maeil sinbo, Russians could not help but “cry under the whip of fierce and disloyal radicals.” 49 The “revolution and terrible war” of the radicals, moreover, led the people to starvation. 50 Comparing post-revolution Russia with Korea under Japanese imperialist rule, Maeil sinbo argued that Korea had “infinite comfort and happiness under the flourishing virtue of the wise and virtuous Emperor” thanks to Japanese rule. 51 Russia was viewed as a country where previously wealthy people were left to starve to death, where eggs were too expensive to buy, and where hungry dead ghosts roamed everywhere. 52 The once strong nation likened to a tiger or wolf, then, did not exist anymore. Japanese imperialists affirmed, “Several years’ war and an overnight revolution changed the Russia as strong as a tiger into a very miserable country.” 53

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49. Maeil sinbo, July 18, 1919.
50. Maeil sinbo, October 23, 1919.
51. Maeil sinbo, September 20, 1919.
52. Maeil sinbo, May 6, 1919; October 23–24, 1919; April 11–16, 1920.
53. Maeil sinbo, October 23, 1919.
Second, the Japanese Government-General of Korea utilized *Maeil sinbo* to project the image of Russia as an immoral, inhumane, and, especially, sexually degraded society. According to a *Maeil sinbo* article dated May 2, 1919, Russia was a country of “beasts” (*kũmsu* 禽獸), which designated “young women from the ages of seventeen to thirty-two” as state-owned property. The article explained such a nonsensical claim with a very specific example: “The law allows all male citizens to share the young women. A man has the right to possess a woman for three hours three times a week.” In addition, *Maeil sinbo* claimed that Russian schools housed boys and girls in the same dormitory to encourage sexual indulgence, and depicted indiscriminate adultery in the Russian army.

Third, *Maeil sinbo* was bent on revealing Russia’s invasive nature. The number of articles emphasizing Russia’s violence and aggressiveness drastically increased as the Japanese Empire advanced into Northeast China in the 1930s, causing more frequent direct conflicts with the Soviet army. The number of armed conflicts concentrated on the border area began to increase steadily after the establishment of the state of Manchuria 滿洲國 in 1932 and reached a peak in 1938 at the Battle of Lake Khasan, which was also referred to as the Zhanggufeng Incident 張鼓峰事件. The Battle of Lake Khasan was a border conflict in Khasan, which bordered the Tumen River, that took place between July and August 1938. It began with a preemptive strike by Japanese troops, but ended with Japan’s crushing defeat. The Soviet army won the battle with its overwhelming forces and firepower, but it was a fierce battle leaving hundreds of people dead and thousands injured on both sides.

Between 1938 and 1939, there were at least five hundred articles in *Maeil sinbo* that emphasized the aggressive characteristics of the Soviet Union. An article published on July 21, 1938, titled “Hundreds of illegal Soviet invasions in recent years,” stipulated Soviet policy as “red aggression.” The article claimed, “The problem of the Soviet Union was one of the greatest issues of our nation since the Manchurian Incident and is still very important.” Furthermore, it argued, “Everyone knew the Stalinist regime was trying to engage in external warfare to avoid the explosion of public grievance in the Soviet Union.” It thus shifted responsibility for the border conflict created by Japan’s advance into the

55. *Maeil sinbo*, July 8, 1920; August 1, 1919; Pak Hŏnho, “1920-nyŏndaeh chŏnban’gi maeil sinbo,” 41-44.
Chinese continent onto Soviet expansionism and aggression.\textsuperscript{57} Maeil sinbo also published a five-part series on the “Eastern Invasion from Russia” from October 27 to November 2, 1938, which emphasized only the aggressive characteristics of Russia.\textsuperscript{58}

In order to prevent the spread of revolutionary and socialist ideology, Japan established strong laws and systems such as the Maintenance of the Public Order Act and the System for Watching over Thoughts beginning in the 1920s and continued to strengthen negative propaganda regarding the Soviet Union. At that time, the Japanese perception of Russia was a negative one of hunger, cruelty, inhumanity, sexual depravity, and aggressiveness. This negative perception was further strengthened in the process of establishing a militaristic state system in Japan in the late 1930s.

Counter-revolution and Anti-Soviet Sentiment among Pro-Japanese Korean Collaborators, 1917–1945

It is clear that Japan strengthened its negative propaganda against Russia after the Russian Revolution in 1917. But just how influential was the Russophobia promoted by Japanese imperialists among the Korean people? It must be acknowledged that it is very difficult to judge how ordinary Korean people under Japanese colonial rule responded to Japan’s counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet sentiment since there is virtually no historical data showing widespread perceptions of Russia among ordinary Koreans. On the other hand, from the 1920s Korean elites’ perceptions of Russia can be reasonably deduced from newspapers, magazines, personal letters, and diaries.

Korean elites’ perception of Russia, intelligible in contemporaneous historical documents, was actually very complex. Positive and negative perceptions intermingled in many cases. Many Korean intellectuals regarded the Russian Revolution as a means to help Korea escape Japanese colonial rule, but at the same time they tried to dismiss it as an immoral act of violence.\textsuperscript{59} In other words, despite persistent negative propaganda by Japanese imperialists, many Korean elites sometimes had a positive view of Russia and sometimes a negative one based on their own judgment according to the issues. However, some Koreans consistently maintained a negative stance regarding the socialist

\textsuperscript{57} Maeil sinbo, July 21, 1938.
\textsuperscript{58} Maeil sinbo, October 27–November 2, 1938.
\textsuperscript{59} Hwang Tongha, “Ilche singminji sidae,” 191–217.
revolution and the Bolshevik regime. Yun Ch’iho 尹致昊, Ch’oe Namsŏn 崔南善, and Yi Kwangsu 李光洙, who can be classified as pro-Japanese collaborators, were such typical figures.

Yun Ch’iho, the first Korean to study in Japan and the U.S., attended the Anglo-Chinese College (Zhongxi shuyuan 中西書院) in China and Vanderbilt University and Emory University in the United States. Yun was well known as president of the Independence Association (1898), which led nationalist and modern reform movements, and was one of the most representative modern Korean intellectuals in the late nineteenth century. However, Yun revised his stance against all forms of national independence movement during the Japanese colonial period. He continued his remarkable anti-nationalistic activities as a prominent collaborator in the late colonial period. He participated as a key figure in leading pro-Japanese organizations such as the Association of National Spiritual Mobilization of Chosŏn, the Association of Supporters for Volunteers of Chosŏn, the Patriotic Association for the War of Chosŏn, and the Patriotic Association for the Press of Chosŏn. He also accepted the position as an advisor to the Privy Council (Chungch’uwŏn 中樞院) of the Japanese Government-General of Korea in 1941.60

Yun Ch’iho is very well known for his daily diary entries he kept up for sixty years from 1883 to 1943. Mostly written in English, they convey a frank and detailed presentation of his daily life, his activities as an official, and his personal views on domestic and international affairs. Therefore, one can also easily see in these diaries the straightforward and outspoken perceptions of a pro-Japanese intellectual on Russia, the Russian Revolution, and socialism.

According to an existing study on Yun Ch’iho’s perception of Russia, in the late Chosŏn period Yun’s perspective on Russia constantly changed according to circumstances such as the Sino-Japanese War, Úlmi Incident, King Kojong’s refuge at the Russian legation, and the Russo-Japanese War.61 However, his understanding of Russia and the Russian Revolution during the Japanese colonial period was almost identical to the counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet arguments of Maeil sinbo. As mentioned above, Maeil sinbo concentrated on revealing Russia’s chaos, cruelty, immorality and inhumanity. In this respect, there was no difference between Yun Ch’iho’s and Maeil sinbo’s descriptions of Russia.

In a public speech titled “Dangerous ideas of the past and present” (December 6, 1920) sponsored by the Chosŏn Economic Committee, Yun Ch’iho mentioned three reasons why people must not fall for “Bolshevism.” First, a country would fall into a state of starvation. Second, there would be uncontrollable chaos. Third, there would be bloodshed. The above three claims were the same as the ones mentioned in the descriptions of anti-revolution and anti-Sovietism in Maeil sinbo, which asserted that Russia was in a state of ruin, chaos, and violence.

In addition, after reading the autobiography of Benito Mussolini in 1929, Yun stressed the necessity of introducing fascism in order to overthrow socialism: “Korea must have a person like Mussolini to save the people from horrible things like romantic internationalism, bestial Bolshevism, and disgusting socialism.” In 1941, after hearing about Hitler’s invasion of Russia, Yun remarked, “I hope Hitler will deal a catastrophic blow to Bolshevism, which is an unprecedented vice in human history.” Yun Ch’iho, who maintained such intense counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet sentiments, said that if he had to make a choice between Japanese rule and Russian Bolshevism, he would choose the former rather than the latter.

Ch’oe Namsŏn provides another example of counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet sentiments among pro-Japanese collaborators. As previously mentioned, Maeil sinbo featured a five-part series on the “Eastern Invasion from Russia” in 1938. Ch’oe Namsŏn, under the penname “Yukdang Hag’in” 六堂學人, wrote this series. Ch’oe was originally one of the national representatives who drafted the “Declaration of Independence” in March 1919. However, beginning in the late 1920s, he came to be well known as a pro-Japanese intellectual. During this phase of his career, he participated in the Chosŏn History Compilation Committee, became a professor in the law department at Kyŏngsŏng Imperial University, joined the Ch’onggu Society, served as a councilor on the Privy Council, and became a professor at Kŏnkuk University.

Ch’oe wrote his five-part series on the “Eastern Invasion from Russia” in Maeil sinbo from October 27 to November 2, 1938, shortly after the Battle of Lake Khasan. The series was published under the following titles: “1) National History of Russia,” “2) Russia under Mongolian Rule,” “3) Romanov Dynasty,” “4) Contact with the Qing Dynasty,” and “5) Common enemies of

62. Kim Sang’ae, ed., Yun Ch’ibo ilgi, December 6, 1920, 204.
63. Ibid., February 11, 1929, 259.
64. Ibid., July 22, 1941, 485.
65. Ibid., March 23, 1934, 327.
all the world.” Each article emphasized Russian aggressiveness, as evident in the following passage:

If one comes to know in detail Russia’s traditional policy of aggression and its ferocious claws and molars aimed toward East Asia over the last few centuries, one cannot but be shaken, and will be determined to exercise vigilance and arouse other’s attention to this… The reason Russia is so vast is that its aggression on all fronts is so wicked, consistent, and indiscriminately predatory. This viciousness plainly exposes the characteristics of Russian history. It is true that the development of any nation is closely related to the invasion of other countries, but Russia is unique in that it continually and exhaustively plunders [emphasis added].

Ch’oe Namsŏn explained that Russia was extremely invasive and violent. His descriptions were very similar to those that appeared in Huang Zunxian’s Chosŏn Stratagem. To Ch’oe, Russia was a country that “continually and exhaustively plunders” and its people were greedy and invasive.

Ch’oe also published a series under the title “Noguk tongch’il yŏndaegi” (Russia’s eastern invasion chronicles) from January 1 to 9, 1939 in Maeil sinbo. This series described the history of Russia’s eastern expansion from 1555 to 1905, the year the Russo-Japanese War ended. The series emphasized Imperial Russia’s eastward expansion over the centuries, showing that border conflicts between Japan and the Soviet Union in the 1930s were neither accidental nor temporary incidents. Ch’oe emphasized that the Soviet Union was “building up a solid stronghold around Manchuria and preparing enormous military personnel and high-tech weapons, preparing to become a greater threat than it had been during the Czarist era.”

Yi Kwangsu was another figure demonstrating the correlation between pro-Japanese collaborators and counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet sentiments. Yi was a well-known novelist who wrote The Heartless (Mujŏng), the first modern Korean novel, and who actively supported Japanese colonialism as chairman of the Chosŏn Writers’ Association. In his younger days Yi had been pro-Russian. He stayed in Russian cities like Vladivostok and Chita for about seven months in 1914 and helped the activities of Korean organizations in Russia. He was able to speak Russian fluently enough to translate Russian literature. He even praised Tolstoy, the great Russian writer, as “one of the

67. Maeil sinbo, January 9, 1939.  
68. Ch’oe Kiyŏng, “Yi Kwangsu ŭi Rŏsia ch’eryu wa munp’il hwaltong” [Yi Kwangsu’s stay in Russia and his writing activities], Minjok munhaksa yŏn’gu 9, no. 1 (1996): 378–381.
greatest people on earth.” However, Yi’s pro-Russian tendency triggered by his love for Tolstoy was overwhelmed by hostility toward socialism and revolution. He displayed a consistent and enthusiastic counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet tendency, similar to Yun Ch’iho and Ch’oe Namsŏn, after the Russian Revolution in 1917.

Yi Kwangsu submitted a petition titled “Urgent countermeasure against overseas Korean people” to the Japanese Government-General of Korea in 1921. In this petition, Yi claimed that there were more than two thousand Koreans who had received higher than a middle-school education in China and Siberia, and that their ideas were rapidly becoming “radical so this was a serious problem that Japan could not tolerate.” Yi emphasized that these Koreans would become “the propagandists of the Russian radicals” through the policies of “the Soviet government.” He also asked in an essay in 1922, “Can the Soviet system and the Red Army give jobs and food to all mankind?” to which he answered, “It’s impossible... We have seen the proof in Soviet Russia.”

As mentioned above, Maeil sinbo, the official organ of the Japanese Government-General of Korea, called the Bolsheviks “radicals” and exaggerated the fact that Russians were suffering from hunger and a cruel and violent reality since the revolution. Yi Kwangsu concurred with this negative Russian image promoted by Japanese imperialists and directly utilized it in personal petitions and popular editorials. The positive Russian image that Yi had personally encountered by reading Tolstoy rapidly deteriorated due to the negative propaganda of Japanese imperialists against the Bolsheviks and socialism after the Russian Revolution. The examples of Yun Ch’iho, Ch’oe Namsŏn, and Yi Kwangsu clearly show that negative perceptions of the Soviet Union and socialism originally propagated by Japanese imperialism gradually disseminated among Koreans through pro-Japanese collaborators.

71. Yi Kwangsu, “Sangjaeng üm segye esŏ sang’ae üm segye e” [From a world of conflicts to a world of love], in Yi Kwangsu chônjip [Complete works of Yi Kwangsu], vol. 17 (Seoul: Samjungdang, 1964), 255.
Conclusion

Koreans believed they would enjoy freedom and common prosperity in the near future when they were liberated from Japan in 1945. However, they suffered national division and had to endure the unfortunate Korean War (1950–1953), which resulted in millions of civilian casualties. Then, extreme anti-communism operated as a dominant ideology in South Korea throughout the Cold War era. Hostility toward and fear of Russia, the socialist motherland, thus constituted one of the most important elements of anti-communism for a long time.

This article clearly shows that Russophobia among Koreans was not just caused by the Cold War. Koreans first encountered Russians in the so-called "Rason chongbol" (Conquest of Russia) in the mid-seventeenth century where they defeated the Russian military. According to historical records, however, Koreans did not consider Russians as foreigners from the West, but as weird barbarians from the northern part of Heilongjiang Province, China. In other words, they regarded Russians as an unfamiliar strange minority group within the Chinese cultural sphere.

This awareness lasted until the mid-eighteenth century when Koreans began to refer to Russia as "Arasa." Encounters between Koreans and Russians at this point mainly took place in Beijing, where meetings were held between Choson envoys dispatched to China and Russian Orthodox Church members staying in Beijing. Although the Choson envoys sent to China showed a great deal of interest in the unfamiliar appearance and customs of the Russians, they did not yet consider "Arasa" a completely different cultural nation from their own, but rather a "strange ethnic group" within the Chinese world order. In general, the Choson envoys regarded the people of "Arasa" as low-class barbarians staying in Beijing to learn Chinese culture. Although Koreans tended to view Russia somewhat negatively until the first half of the nineteenth century, this was only in terms of its "strangeness"; they never viewed Russia as violent and aggressive.

This article shows that the image of Russia as violent and aggressive began to flow into Korea mainly via the Japanese and their followers in the late nineteenth century. Of course, it is true that Russia’s eastern expansion during that era had become a real threat to East Asian countries like China, Japan and Korea. Nonetheless, there were hidden insidious political intentions in Japan’s Russophobia propaganda at that time. Even before Choson opened its ports in 1876, Japanese imperialists wanted to spread Russophobia among Koreans to strengthen their monopolistic power over Choson. Japan never ceased
exaggerating Russia’s aggressive nature until the end of the Russo-Japanese War (1904–1905) in order to strip away Chosŏn sovereignty. Japan actively tried to justify the pillaging of Chosŏn through the logic of “preserving peace in the East Asia” in the face of “plundering white Russian forces.”

Japan’s Russophobia propaganda continued after the colonization of Korea, especially after the Russian Revolution of 1917. Japan implemented institutional devices such as the Act for the Maintenance of the Public Order (1925) to prevent the spread of socialist ideology in Korea and intensified negative propaganda against socialism and the Soviet Union. Maeil sinbo, the official organ of the Japanese Government-General of Korea, published counter-revolutionary and anti-Soviet articles on a daily basis. The articles depicted Russia as an aggressive, inhumane, sexually depraved, starving, and disastrous nation. Absurdly negative images having little to do with the actual state of society at the time were thus actively propagated among the Korean people. These negative Russian images could be strengthened through lectures and newspaper articles by prominent pro-Japanese collaborators such as Yun Ch’iho, Ch’oe Namsŏn, and Yi Kwangsu.

It is noteworthy that it was the Japanese, who strongly desired to plunder Korea, and national traitors, who collaborated with them, who were behind the widespread dissemination of Russophobia among the Korean people. Similarly, at least during the early Cold War period, the main agents behind the spread of anti-Sovietism in South Korea and anti-Americanism in North Korea, though not the subject of this paper, were the United States and Soviet Union, respectively, who each desired to enhance their power over the Korean peninsula. This historical awareness will be helpful to current peace-building efforts meant to resolve the two Koreas’ long-standing historical conflicts and misunderstandings.